



## MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

Wes Shoemyer  
18<sup>th</sup> Senate District

CAPITOL BUILDING, ROOM 434  
JEFFERSON CITY, MO 65101

**A Weekly Column for the  
Week of March 15, 2010**

**Capitol Office:  
(573) 751-7852**

# National Agriculture Week

---

JEFFERSON CITY – Our state is celebrating its number one industry this week – agriculture. Missouri's crops, livestock, processing and other agricultural sectors accounted for more than \$12-billion in 2008. We have more than 105,000 farms spread over 31 million acres. More than 245,000 people work in the agriculture industry in Missouri, and National Agriculture Week celebrates the hard work, sacrifice and achievements of farmers and producers across the state.

I want to thank all of the farmers and producers from northeast Missouri who traveled to Jefferson City this week to attend an important agriculture committee hearing. I appreciated their support as I testified in favor of three bills I am sponsoring that will benefit farmers across the state.

Senate Bill 667 creates the Missouri Seed Availability and Competition Act, which will help preserve our small seed companies and seed cleaning businesses. Senate Bill 766 creates procedures that a patent holder of genetically-modified seed must follow before entering onto private farmland to take plant samples. It would prevent a company like Monsanto from sending investigators to spy on farmers without telling the farmers or the local sheriff what they are doing. Finally, Senate Bill 622 increases the fee for registering a pesticide in Missouri. Our state still charges \$15 per year to register these chemicals when all of the states around us are charging these out-of-state corporations an average of \$150 per year, so Missouri is losing out on more than \$1.3 million each year.

I am proud to be a family farmer but I continue to be frustrated with the lack of state support for Missouri's number one industry. The Department of Agriculture's declining General Revenue budget presents big challenges for our industry. After peaking at \$14.7

million in Fiscal Year 2001, General Revenue appropriations have declined steadily and provided only \$9.6 million in Fiscal Year 2010 for Ag Department operations. Lack of additional financial resources may severely limit the Department's ability to build economic opportunity, prevent the spread of animal and plant disease, uphold marketplace integrity and ensure consumer protection.

We welcomed a number of visitors to our Capitol office this week, including Circuit Clerks from northeast Missouri, students from Scotland County High School, members of the Kirksville Chamber of Commerce, and Teresa Pedersen and the Louisiana Student Council.

If you have any questions or comments about these or any other issues, give my Capitol office a call at (573) 751-7852, send me an email at [wes.shoemyer@senate.mo.gov](mailto:wes.shoemyer@senate.mo.gov), or drop a line to Room 434, State Capitol, 201 W. Capitol Ave., Jefferson City, MO 65101.